

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 77

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 42

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 77—Relative to Lymphedema Awareness Day.

[Filed with Secretary of State April 28, 2006.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 77, Alquist. Lymphedema Awareness Day.

This measure would declare March 6, 2006, to be Lymphedema Awareness Day.

WHEREAS, Lymphedema is a serious chronic disease that plagues thousands of Californians who are either born with the condition, or who develop it as a result of trauma, surgical insult, radiation therapy, or a combination of these factors; and

WHEREAS, Ninety percent of Lymphedema cases are the result of trauma or medical treatment; and

WHEREAS, The remaining 10 percent result from congenital defects of the lymph system; and

WHEREAS, Several thousand Californians will be put at risk or will develop Lymphedema each year as a consequence of cancer treatment, surgical insult, or physical trauma; and

WHEREAS, Lymphedema is the chronic accumulation of fluid in an affected limb, trunk, breast, or face; and

WHEREAS, Without professional treatment and self-care this accumulation results in the gross distention of the lymph-filled body part and chronic infections that can become life-threatening lacking prompt treatment; and

WHEREAS, Lymphedema often leaves its victims disfigured, as well as physically and emotionally disabled; and

WHEREAS, Many Lymphedema patients are breast cancer survivors who have undergone surgery, lymph node removal, often in combination with subsequent radiation therapy. However, similar treatments for colon cancer, melanoma, and uterine, ovarian, and cervical cancer can also cause Lymphedema; and

WHEREAS, This condition is often ignored or trivialized by many in the medical community because it is incurable and requires lifetime surveillance and treatment that may not always be known by the medical professional; and

WHEREAS, Persons at risk for Lymphedema must apply a regimen of self-care to prevent or delay the onset of symptoms that is nearly as

rigorous as self-care requirements for patients already afflicted with Lymphedema; and

WHEREAS, Despite the fact that Lymphedema's presence appears to be increasing, particularly with reference to treatment-induced Lymphedema, much of the medical community fails to acknowledge the need for prompt and timely diagnoses and treatment; and

WHEREAS, At present, many persons are denied coverage for Lymphedema because their health care plans do not recognize Lymphedema as an incurable disease; and

WHEREAS, Instead, it is treated as a physical disability that requires rehabilitation rather than treatment; and

WHEREAS, The cost of medically necessary bandages and compression garments is passed on to the patient because these necessities are termed "durable medical equipment"; and

WHEREAS, Many Lymphedema patients are denied reimbursement for their paraphernalia without which uncontrolled swelling and life-threatening infections may occur; and

WHEREAS, Timely diagnosis and treatment is often not available to patients, particularly those in rural areas, making Lymphedema more difficult to manage with more negative health consequences due delays in diagnosing and treating the condition; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature declares March 6, 2006, to be Lymphedema Awareness Day; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.